# PACKAGING®

THE CAHNERS MAGAZINE FOR DECISION-MAKERS/APRIL 1990

## PAPERBOARD CREATIVITY

New Finishes And Folds Expand Carton Options

Eastpack/Interphex Show Preview

Special Show New Product Marketplace

Clever Packaging Boosts Men's Hair-Care Products

Reversing Conveyor Smooths Flow For Chocolate Maker

Basic Facts On Capping Machinery

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# CONTENTS

A CAHNERS PUBLICATION VOLUME 35 NUMBER 5

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## PACKAGING NEWS

**Earth Day 1990: A chance to take action** 8
Cleaning up the environment is too big a job for any one individual or any one industry

**Test-tube-like container** works for Germaine Monteil skin-moisture cosmetic 15

**Hermetically sealed chocolates box** takes top honors in AIMCAL competition 20

## PACKAGING FEATURES

### PRODUCT BREAKTHROUGHS

**New finishes and folds expand carton options** 38
High-tech leads to high-fashion. Everyone involved in paperboard is boosting creativity

### PLANT OPERATIONS

**Line of the Month: Stop for changes, yet keep speed high** 44
Accumulators are unnecessary when reversing belts fit product flow to wrapper demand

### SPECIAL REPORTS

**Clever packaging boosts men's hair-care** 54
Clean-looking, no-fuss packages help marketers conquer men's "fear of hair care"

**EastPack 90/Interphex USA pack in new ideas** 70
Packaging technology abounds in these side-by-side shows

### PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

**Basic facts on capping machinery** 61
Rotary and straight-line cappers offer speeds from 60 to 500 per minute

## PACKAGING TECHNOLOGY

**Keebler positions legible date codes** 65
Hot-ink codes are printed in the same location, indicating machine, shift and time

**Seafood entree enters shelf-stable market** 67
Six-layer plastic trays provide oxygen and moisture resistance for 12 months

**Durable PE sleeve-label offers aesthetic appeal** 67
High-gloss label stays on insecticide container, withstands high humidity

### SPECIAL SECTION

**Spring 1990 New Products Marketplace** 75
Guide to products packagers need to cut costs, increase productivity and enhance package performance

## DEPARTMENTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EDITORIAL | 3 | ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS | 35 | CLASSIFIED | 109 |
| PACKAGING NEWS | 27 | NEW EQUIPMENT | 76 | ADVERTISERS INDEX | 119 |
| CALENDAR | 28 | NEW MATERIALS | 92 | WRAP UP | 120 |
| PEOPLE | 30 | LITERATURE | 102 | READER SERVICE CARD | 121 |

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PACKAGING formerly Package Engineering including Modern Packaging (ISSN 0746-3820) is published monthly, except in February and June when two issues are published, in national, demographic and separate editions by The Cahners Publishing Company, A Division of Reed Publishing USA, 275 Washington Street, Newton MA 02158-1630. Terrence M. McDermott, President; Charles E. Moodhe, Senior Vice President/General Manager, Chicago Division; Jerry D. Neth, Senior Vice President/Publishing Operations; J.J. Walsh, Senior Vice President/Finance; Thomas J. Dellamaria, Senior Vice President/Production and Manufacturing; Ralph Knupp, Vice President/Human Resources. Circulation records are maintained at Cahners Publishing Company, 44 Cook Street, Denver, CO 80206-5800. Phone 303/388-4511. Second-class postage paid at Denver, CO 80206-5800 and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address corrections to PACKAGING at our Denver address. PACKAGING formerly Package Engineering including Modern Packaging, copyright 1990 by Reed Publishing USA; Ronald G. Segel, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer; Robert L. Krakoff, President and Chief Operating Officer; William M. Platt, Senior Vice President.

# High-Tech Leads To High Fashion

## Or is it the other way around? No matter. Everyone involved in paperboard is boosting creativity

**Peggable carton** for a new flashlight borrows its shape from plastic clamshells, features flashy graphics.

**By Greg Erickson**
Senior Editor

One paperboard-carton professional sums up recent changes in his business like so: "This is a fashion industry."

Says another, "Everyone seems to want something new and unique. Marketing departments are fueling something novel to catch the customer's eye."

New computer-aided design systems are leading to intricate configurations. High-speed die-cutting equipment is producing cartons that were mere daydreams just a few years ago. Computer-controlled adhesive applicators are simplifying gluing sequences, making complicated packages economical.

High-fashion in cartons also involves sophisticated printing, embossing and high-sheen finishes. Says a spokesperson for the National Paperbox & Packaging Association, "Twenty years ago a typical order was for a one-color or two-color folding carton. Today it is very common to have six, seven or even eight colors with aqueous or plastic coating."

Consider just a few of the cartons displayed recently during the NP&PA's 40th Annual Packaging Competition.

The one used for Meriden cologne from Scarborough and Co. is printed in four colors with an overall gloss coating and spot-printed matte coating. As if that weren't enough, it is further adorned with stamped gold foil.

Million Stars perfume by Parfum de Coeur features two impressions of dark blue ink, hot stampings of gold and silver (the stars, of course) and a topcoat of plastic film.

The new carton for Formula 44 cough syrup from Richardson Vicks uses advanced printing technology to help prevent what could be called package counterfeiting. Decorated in a highly complex manner—eight colors on the outside and one on the inside—it discourages generic copycats.

### Shining examples

In vogue throughout the folding-carton business for all kinds of products from candy to sunglasses is eye-catching high gloss. Most common are coatings that utilize ultraviolet, or UV, curing. Also growing in use are electron-beam curing systems. The Budget Gourmet frozen-entree carton, for instance, makes use of an EB-cured coating to boost shelf presence.

Another shining example is the revamped carton used by Vipont Pharmaceuticals for Viadent toothpaste. Previously, the graphics were printed by web gravure on acetate, which was then laminated to the solid bleached sulfate. Recently Vipont moved to sheet-fed offset printing and UV coating. (Also interesting about the Viadent carton is the perforated panel made to be torn away for use as an instantly redeemable coupon.)

Handling all these slippery little devils presents challenges to manufacturers of cartoning machinery. "There are some really sensitive requirements about marring

**Colorful, intricate, glossy** are apt descriptions for today's folding cartons, including these for pharmaceuticals and personal-care products.

**PAPERBOARD PACKAGING SALES HIT $22 BILLION IN 1989**

- Corrugated $15.7 billion
- Milk cartons, molded pulp, aseptic $1.2 billion
- Folding cartons $3.8 billion
- Fiber cans, drums $1.2 billion

Source: Kline and Co.

the package during the filling process," says one machinery supplier. "We have had to go to great lengths in designing rails and such to avoid scuffing." In addition, since hot-melt adhesive doesn't stick well to the glossy coatings, glue must be applied with great accuracy.

Adhesive changes are occurring also in microwavable cartons. At present, trays of the type used for Budget Gourmet need flanges because traditional sealing methods don't work effectively for paperboard coated with polypropylene or polyester. Flanges allow the cartons to be crimped for a secure seal. New work with cold-vinyl adhesives and fine-mist application techniques may open the door to flangeless microwavable cartons.

Tuck-end cartons are diminishing in popularity as glue-end cartons grow. The main reason is tamper evidence. "We're seeing that throughout almost everything that goes into the supermarket," says an executive with a machinery manufacturer.

### All the rage

Custom cartons are in big demand. To handle a unique carton, though, you may need a unique machine. Says a machinery maker, "A manufacturer like us has to be a custom-engineering company."

Often, such a custom-designed machine is dedicated to a single package. The more unusual the shape of the package, the more difficult is changeover.

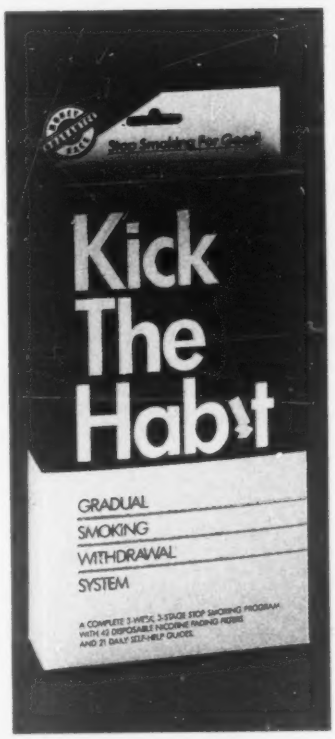
For cartons that are more or less standard in size and shape, changeover from one type of carton to another can take as little as 15 minutes or as much as two hours. Need for fast changeover seems to fall as packaging volume rises. As one machinery supplier puts it, "Even two hours for changeover isn't a big deal if the cartoner has been running one carton for a month."

Says another machinery executive, "Theoretically, there's interest in changeover, chiefly in the pharmaceuticals market. There it's common to have short runs of specialized products. But the other markets are becoming more dedicated: More and more products have a big enough demand that they run just one product on the line on a regular basis."

### Speed vs. simplicity

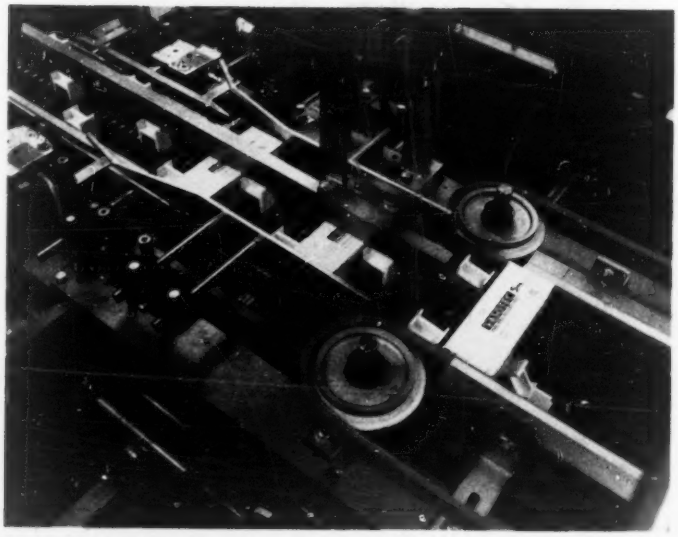
Although cartoning machines have not changed dramatically in recent years, they are increasing in speed. A machinery maker says, "The fastest cartons we have ever done were those little single-serve raisin cartons. We did them at 1,200 a minute."

At the same time, though, there seems to be a move toward increased simplicity. "Machines today are capable of being equipped with computers that can be expanded into logic-control systems," says a spokesperson for a machinery company. "But I'm seeing disinterest in that from a lot of packagers. They would rather get back to a




**Embossing** and gold foil catch the consumer's eye and help make this $30 stop-smoking kit a big seller. The company says the product remains sold out in most markets.

Packagers want it both ways: complex cartons, simple machines



**Speedy changeover**, always a benefit, is a relative term: Even two hours is not excessive if the line runs a single carton for lengthy periods.

simplified machine that their workers feel comfortable with." The spokesperson says his company has produced a couple of extremely simple, non-computerized machines and is finding a good market for them. "People know they can go out and get components for them readily," he adds.

Also, according to a machinery maker who says his company sells six to 10 times more continuous-motion cartoning machines than intermittent-motion models, "The most difficult cartons may be handled best by an intermittent machine."

For some packagers, more than one medium-speed machine may prove better than a single fast model. A machinery maker explains: "If you have one dedicated line and a total output of 400 to 500 units per minute, you won't find a wrapper that will wrap anything that fast. So instead of one cartoner that can run at 400 a minute, maybe it would be best to put in two cartoners with a top speed of 250 units per minute each. You would spend more for those two machines than for a single high-speed machine, but if one of the two machines goes completely down, you can still get product out the door."

**One last fashion note**

Clothing that's in style one year can easily fall from favor the next, especially if it seems too showy for newly conservative times. The same could prove true for folding cartons.

"With concern for the environment rising," says a supplier of folding cartons, "a lot of designers have a great deal of concern about overpackaging."

However, if a carton presents an opportunity to provide thorough product information, boost shelf presence and raise product protection, it could very well prove worthwhile, despite the nasty looks it might get from critics of packaging. ■

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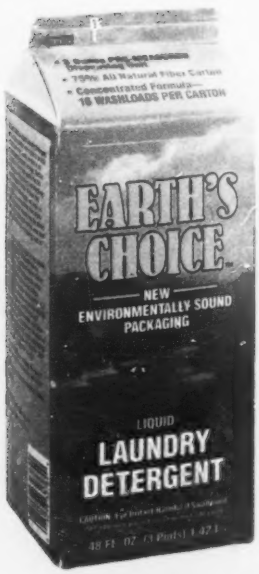
**GREG ERICKSON**
Senior Editor

"This being a fashion industry, it's no wonder that cartons really strut their stuff when the product is perfume. Fragrance makers seem to be sparing no expense in their use of paperboard."




**Inside the gable-top** is a device that lets users measure 3 ounces of detergent by tipping the carton part way.

## GABLE-TOP HOLDS DETERGENT FOR SIX MONTHS

Looking a lot like the gable-top carton on the cover of PACKAGING's August 1989 issue is a new package introduced by detergent maker Brittco. The make-believe carton that introduced our special environment issue and Brittco's brand-new "environmentally sound packaging" feature nearly identical landscapes, complete with mountain peaks and blue skies.

A message on the gable-top used for Earth's Choice liquid detergent reads, "The supplier of this carton is a leading paper manufacturer who is . . . concerned with our environment."

A press release from the carton manufacturer, however, includes no mention of environmental benefits. Instead, it discusses how packagers of detergents, lubricants and and other hard-to-contain liquids can reduce costs by using paperboard.

In this case, there's much more than paperboard involved. In order to contain its highly aggressive detergent, Brittco chose a carton incorporating paper, foil and polyethylene as the product-contact layer. These materials, and a configuration that eliminates raw interior edges, give the package a shelf life of at least six months.

Adhered to the interior of the carton is a device that enables the consumer to measure out 3 ounces of detergent by just tipping the carton part way.